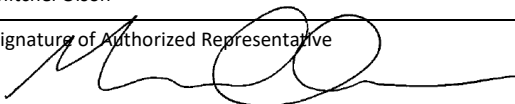


# BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

## For Fiscal Year 2022

<p>Primary Applicant (Name and Address):</p> <p>Bug Tussel Wireless, LLC 417 Pine Street Green Bay, WI 54301 (920) 940-0138</p>	<p>Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, <a href="http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx">http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx</a>. Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions.</p> <p>Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: <b>March 17, 2022</b> at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. <b>Late applications will not be accepted.</b></p>
	<p>Contact for further information: <a href="mailto:PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov">PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov</a></p>
	<p>Date: March 17, 2022</p>
<p>The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.</p>	
<p><b>Applicant Certification:</b> In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.</p>	
<p>Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print)</p> <p>Mitchel Olson</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>Chief Development Officer   General Counsel</p>
<p>Signature of Authorized Representative</p> 	<p>Phone (    )</p> <p>920.940.0138</p>
	<p>Date</p> <p>March 17, 2022</p>

## SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name  Bug Tussel Wireless, LLC	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar)  \$2,918,375
Federal Employer Identification No.  20-0284635	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar)  \$8,755,125
Contact Name and Title  Mitchel Olson – Chief Development Officer   General Counsel	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar)  \$11,673,500
Telephone Number  920.940.0138	Project Name  R.O.A.D. to Digital Equality - Jefferson County
E-mail Address(es)  mitchel.olson@bugtusselwireless.com	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.)  FTTH
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant  N/A	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other)  Middle-mile / Last-mile
Grant Manager Contact Name  N/A	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number  N/A
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations  Jefferson County 311 S Center Avenue Jefferson, WI 53549	
Brief Project Description (2 sentences)  The Jefferson County R.O.A.D. to Digital Equality Project is the deployment of 187.7 miles of fiberoptic middle-mile, completing a ring throughout Jefferson County, while providing gigabit service to homes and business locations along that route. This project is “Open Access” allows for future expansion and encourages faster deployment of countywide fiber to the premise, which supports immediate economic opportunity for residents and businesses.	
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed  1 Gbps`	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed  1 Gbps
Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location  200 mbps	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location  200 mbps

<p>County or Counties served by this project</p> <p>Jefferson County</p>	<p>Community or Communities served by this project</p> <p>Town of Aztalan, Town of Milford, City of Lake Mills, Town of Lake Mills, Town of Waterloo, Town of Farmington, Village of Johnson Creek, City of Jefferson, Town of Jefferson, Town of Koshkonong, City of Fort Atkinson, Town of Oakland, Town of Sumner, Village of Palmyra, Town of Palmyra, Town of Hebron, Town of Sullivan, Town of Cold Spring, City of Whitewater, City of Watertown, Town of Watertown, Town of Ixonia, Town of Concord, Village of Sullivan, City of Waterloo</p>
<p>List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve</p> <p>AT&amp;T, CenturyLink, Charter Communications, Frontier Communications, TDS, Edge Broadband, LiteWire, Netwurx, US Cellular, upnetwi</p>	
<p>Does proposed project serve an <i>unserved</i> area of the State, as defined in <a href="#">Section 1.4</a> of the application instruction? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>For last mile projects or component the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access).</p> <p>509</p>	<p>For last mile projects or components the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access).</p> <p>9,666</p>
<p>Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <i>unserved</i>?</p> <p>103</p>	<p>Of the improved residential locations, how many are <i>unserved</i>?</p> <p>1,951</p>
<p>For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021? (yes/no)</p> <p>Yes</p>	

# FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application

## Budget & Income Summary



Please complete this form using Microsoft Excel. A PDF copy must be attached to your application as page four. In addition, this form must also be uploaded to ERF in Excel format.

### Grant Summary

Grant Applicant:	Project:
Bug Tussel Wireless, LLC	R.O.A.D. to Digital Equality - Jefferson County

### Budget

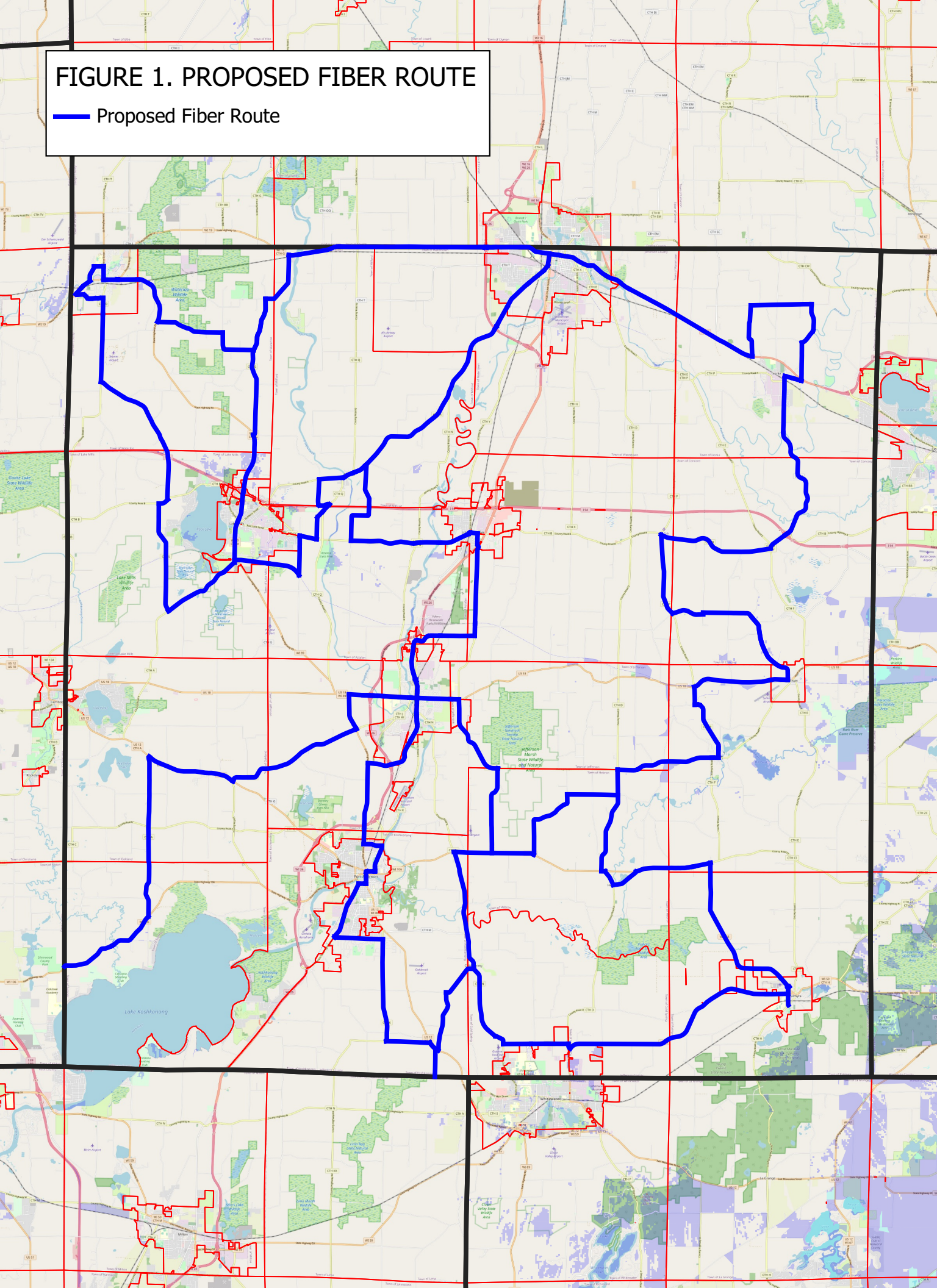
Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	\$ 1,958,264.50	\$ 5,874,793.50	\$ 7,833,058.00
2	Equipment	\$ 195,100.00	\$ 585,300.00	\$ 780,400.00
3	Supplies	\$ 582,472.25	\$ 1,747,416.75	\$ 2,329,889.00
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)	\$ 123,882.00	\$ 371,646.00	\$ 495,528.00
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees	\$ 58,656.25	\$ 175,968.75	\$ 234,625.00
6	Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
7	Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total:		\$ 2,918,375.00	\$ 8,755,125.00	\$ 11,673,500.00
75.0% match requested				

### Pledged Contributions

#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	Bug Tussel Wireless / Jefferson County - Partnership	Applicant	Cash	\$ 7,755,125.00
2	Jefferson County	Partner	Cash	\$ 1,000,000.00
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total:				\$ 8,755,125.00



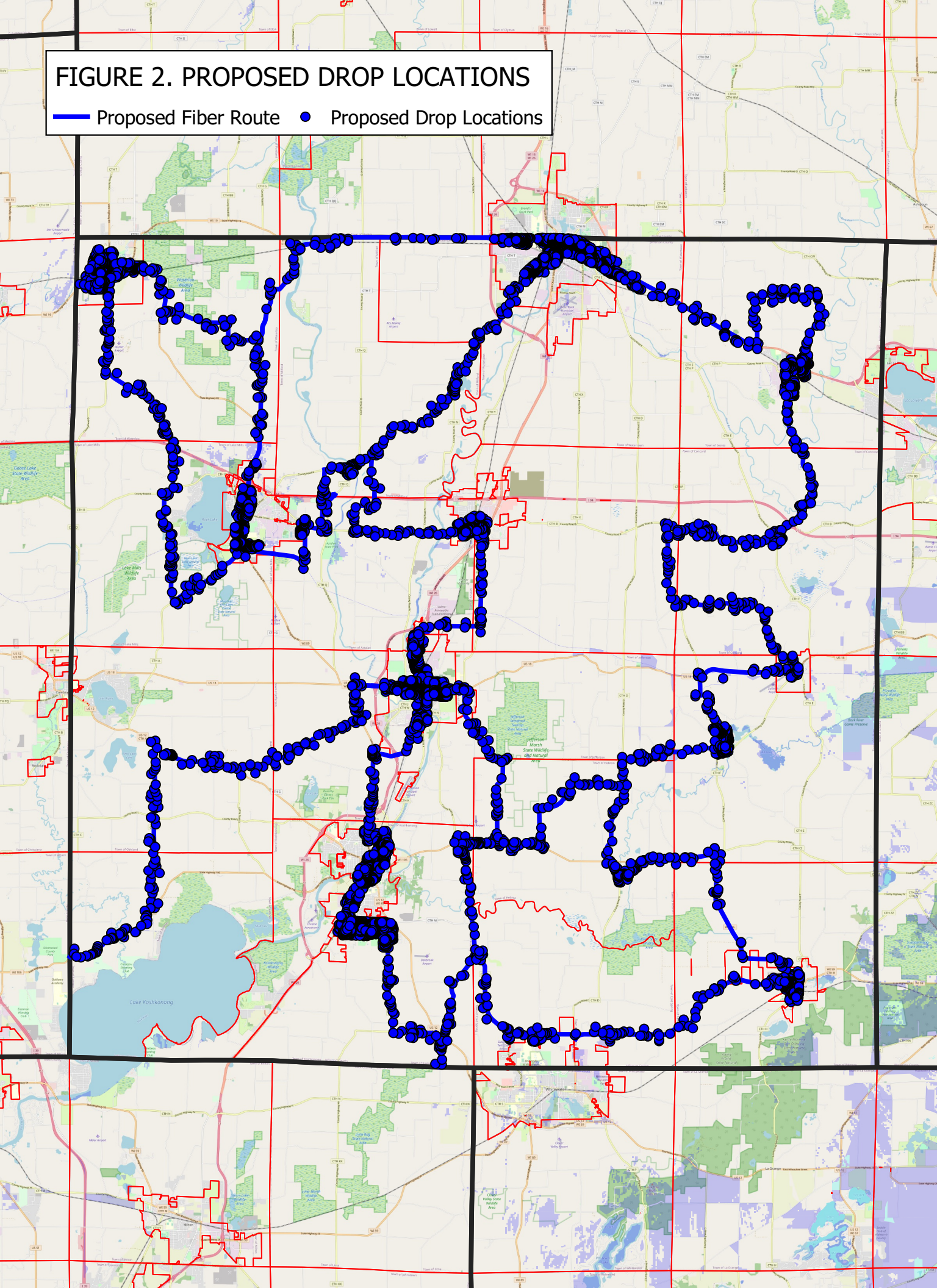
— Proposed Fiber Route





## FIGURE 2. PROPOSED DROP LOCATIONS

— Proposed Fiber Route    • Proposed Drop Locations



### **3.2 Mandatory application requirements**

#### **3.2.1 Applicant identification and contact information**

**a. The name and address of the entity applying for the grant, and the mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address of one or more contact persons representing the applicant.**

Name of Entity: Bug Tussel Wireless, LLC ("Bug Tussel")

Mailing Address: 417 Pine Street  
Green Bay, WI 54701

Contact: Mitchel Olson

Title: Chief Development Officer | General Counsel

Phone: 920.940.0138

Email: mitchel.olson@bugtusselwireless.com

**b. If the application proposes a public-private partnership, the identity and contact information for all application partners.**

Name of Entity: Jefferson County

Mailing Address: 311 S Center Avenue  
Jefferson, WI 53549

Contact: Mr. Ben Wehmeier

Title: County Administrator

Phone: 920.674.7101

Email: benjaminw@jeffersoncountyiwi.gov

**c. The application must show that the applicant is an organization, a telecommunications utility, or a city, village, town, or county that has established a legal partnership or joint venture arrangement with an otherwise qualified organization or telecommunications utility, and as such meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504(1).**

Hilbert Communications, LLC, and its subsidiary, Bug Tussel Wireless, LLC, are Wisconsin Limited Liability Companies, with their headquarters located at 417 Pine Street, Green Bay, WI 54701, and are Eligible applicants, as defined by §196.504(1)(ac)(1).

#### **3.2.2 Description of the project**

**a. A static map and description of the area of the State that will be affected by the proposed project.**

Please see the enclosed project maps, located on pages 5 and 6. The enclosed maps show the proposed middle-mile route throughout Jefferson County, but the impact will be well beyond the route as shown. Future expansion projects, utilizing the middle-mile, will reach beyond the original territory served in this phase of deployment. With these additional projects, all of Jefferson County will be affected by this project.

**b. If the project area lies within a census block designated as served on the PSC Broadband Map, provide additional documentation to demonstrate the actual broadband service that is available in the proposed project area.**

Please see the attached statement (attached as **Exhibit B**) of Ben Wehmeier, County Administrator, which details the need for broadband expansion in rural Jefferson County.

**c. An explanation of how the proposed project will increase broadband access. Include information about the:**

This project will increase broadband access by making last-mile fiber to the premises connections, in addition to installing middle-mile fiber with substantial capacity for expansion.

This project will have the capacity to service the 9,666 households located along the fiber route, in addition to the 509 business. Of those, 1,951 homes and 103 businesses are in underserved and unserved areas.

The fiber to the premises packages available will include a symmetrical 200 mbps download / 200 mbps upload option for \$64.99, in addition to a 1 Gbps download / 1 Gbps upload option for \$99.99.

**d. A statement whether the proposed project is targeting the “last mile,” “middle mile,” or backbone portion of the broadband infrastructure.**

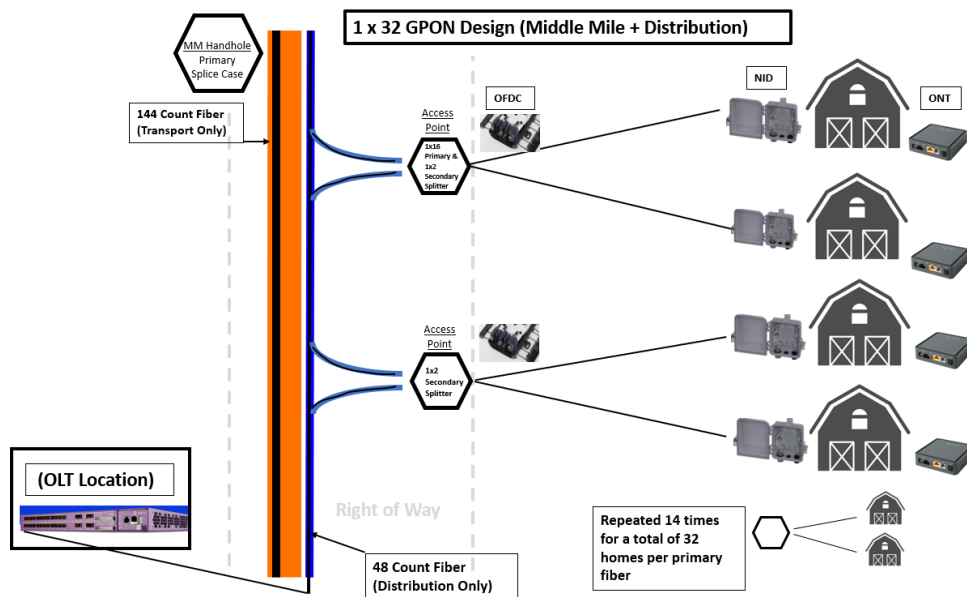
The proposed project will consist of both middle-mile and last-mile assets. The proposed project area is in significant need of additional backbone infrastructure and capacity, with last-mile connections being made along that route to promote a “dig-once” construction model.

**e. A description of the broadband service to be provided, including estimated download and upload speeds, whether the speed is based on dedicated or shared bandwidth, and the technology that will be used. This description may be illustrated by a map or schematic diagram, as appropriate.**

The network will consist of fiber optic cable connected to GPON/ONT electronics that will provide capacity for over 1 Gbps to each residence and business along the fiber route along with Dense Wave Division Multiplexing (DWDM) equipment for traffic aggregation, capable of supporting 200 to 800 Gbps.

As shown in Figure 3 below, a 144 strand transport fiber will be buried alongside a separate 48 strand fiber that will be utilized for fiber to the premises.

**Figure 3 – Middle-mile and Distribution Design.**



**f. For middle mile projects:**

At this time, no additional last-mile connections can be disclosed publicly. That said, Bug Tussel with itself be making last mile connections utilizing the middle-mile for transport.

Connections incident to this grant application will be made within the two-year construction window contemplated for this project, and additional last-mile projects will be completed, by both Bug Tussel and other internet service providers, in the years that follow.

By making the last-mile connections along the middle-mile route simultaneous to the installation of the middle-mile, it will not be necessary to perform additional construction projects along the same route. This conforms to the “dig-once” construction model, saving both time and construction expense.

**g. A schedule by which the applicant intends to complete the components of the proposed project. The project period is up to 24 months.**

Final route design, in conjunction with Bug Tussel’s partners, and engineering will commence immediately following the announcement of the grant award. This process will last through the end of 2022, with construction beginning in early 2023. Construction of the main-line fiber is anticipated to be completed in June, 2023, with last-mile drops and installations beginning shortly thereafter. It is Bug Tussel’s expectation that the project with be completed by June, 2024.

### 3.2.3 Itemized Budget (all amounts should be rounded to the nearest dollar)

- a. In addition to the Summary of Project Budget that is included as page 3, applicants should include a price list or quote for any equipment the applicant intends to purchase, including capital expenditures. The application should also indicate whether any facilities involved would be owned, rented, or leased.

At this time, Bug Tussel does not intend to purchase any equipment to facilitate construction pursuant to this grant application. All assets installed incident to this project will be owned and operated by Bug Tussel, or a related entity.

- b. The application must show that the grant, if awarded, will not subsidize the expenses of a telecommunications provider or the monthly bills of telecommunications customers. For purposes of this grant program, subsidize means a contribution to the operating costs, including profit, of the telecommunications provider.

The sole purpose of the grant contemplated herein is to facilitate the construction of fiber assets. The grant, if awarded, will not subsidize the expenses of Bug Tussel, nor will it be used to subsidize the costs paid by customers.

- c. The application must show that the grant funds requested will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the underserved areas covered by the application. Construction of broadband infrastructure may include any of the following:

Other than the work done in formulation of this grant application, no planning, engineering, permitting, or construction has taken place. All of the costs of this project, as identified on the enclosed budget, will be incurred during the performance period.

### 3.2.4 Priority factors supporting the application

- a. **Matching funds.** A description of the matching funds the applicant will invest in the proposed project, if any. For each element, indicate the type of match (cash, salary expense, or in-kind contribution). If the application is submitted by a partnership, identify the partner responsible for providing each element of the proposed matching funds. *Note: The requirement for this information is satisfied via inclusion of the completed Funding Statement as page 4 of the application.*

As discussed in Section b below, through the R.O.A.D. to Digital Equality Program, and additional funding sources, Bug Tussel and its partner are pledging a total of \$8,755,125, or 75% of the total project cost.

- b. **Public-private partnerships.** If the public-private partnership is memorialized in a joint venture agreement or other writing, provide a copy of that agreement. If the partnership has not been reduced to a written agreement, provide a short description of the management role, financial commitment, or other contribution to the project for each participating partner.

To fund this project, Bug Tussel is utilizing a conduit bond issuance called the Rural Open Access Design (R.O.A.D.) to Digital Equality. In this public private partnership, the County's contribution to the project will take the form of an underlying guaranty on the bond issuance, and Bug Tussel will be responsible for all payments and costs associated with the project. Bug Tussel will own and operate all assets, and the county will benefit through free use of the fiber for governmental purposes for the lifetime of the bonds in addition to other financial considerations.

The creation of the public private partnership between Bug Tussel and Jefferson County is memorialized by an Agreement to Establish Public Private Partnership for the Purpose of Applying for a Broadband Expansion Grant (attached as **Exhibit A**). Moreover, Jefferson County is contributing \$1,000,000 outside of the bond issuance, which further demonstrates their commitment to this project.

**c. Existing broadband service. A list of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:**

The design of the project contemplated herein has given significant priority to areas avoided by existing internet service providers. Although the middle-mile route passes through areas with existing service, this is a necessary step to develop a reliable broadband network through the project area.

As shown on Table 1 below, several providers have some level of coverage in the project area. This coverage, however, is rarely, if ever, capable of reliably providing broadband service at speeds of 25 mbps download / 3 mbps upload. The services currently offered in the project area do not meet the needs of the residences and businesses in the project area, which is our sole motivator in undertaking this project.

**Table 1. Internet Service Providers.**

Service Provider	Technology Platform	Price Range	Advertised Download Speeds	Advertised Upload Speeds
AT&T	DSL	\$55/month	18 mbps	.768 mbps
Century Link	DSL	Unknown without service address	20 mbps	1.5 mbps
Charter Communications	Cable	Unknown without service address	940 mbps	35 mbps
Frontier Communications	DSL	Unknown without service address	18 mbps	1.0 mbps
TDS	DSL	Unknown without service address	15 mbps	2.0 mbps
Edge Broadband	Fixed Wireless	\$84.35/month	20 mbps	2.0 mbps
LiteWire	Fixed Wireless	\$71.95/month	30 mbps	6.0 mbps
Netwurx	Fixed Wireless	\$84.94/month	20 mbps	10 mbps
US Cellular	Fixed Wireless	Unknown without service address	2 mbps	.064 mbps
Upnetwi	Fixed Wireless	\$137.14/month	50 mbps	10 mbps

Insofar as the middle-mile portion of this project is concerned, installation of the middle-mile pursuant to this project will substantially limit future construction costs related to additional last-mile projects. County governments, municipalities, commercial organizations, and economic development advocates have all identified the need for expanded middle-mile transport to meet current needs, anticipate future needs, and to promote economic development.



The design of the middle-mile route was done in cooperation with Jefferson County, wherein County officials were able to provide first-hand knowledge of existing broadband assets. This information was utilized to avoid existing areas with adequate coverage if at all possible, while still accomplishing County objectives and allowing for the development of a robust middle-mile capable of serving all of the communities throughout Jefferson County.

**d. Project impact. A description of the geographic area and the population, both in terms of absolute numbers and likely users, which will be served by the proposed project. Indicate the number of anticipated residential and business customers in the project area, if known. Explain the speed and quality of internet service that will be available. Include information about the range of packages available for purchase. Provide details on any low-income access programs and steps the project will take to support adoption.**

This project will have a profound impact on broadband access in Jefferson County. Of the 10175 homes and businesses that will be able to immediately take service off the middle-mile fiber route, 2054 are outside of metropolitan areas where broadband service is severely lacking, both in terms of access and affordability.

This expanded access will enable improvements in the lives of the residents of Jefferson County by enabling remote work opportunities, improving access to educational opportunities, and enhancing access to medical services and information.

**e. Scalability. A description of how the proposed project could expand or improve the broadband service it delivers, while maintaining the quality of its broadband service. This description should include specific projected increases in the following parameters that are known at the time of the application:**

Bug Tussel is undertaking a significant fiber-optic build out across Wisconsin, with proposed projects in more than 45 of the 72 counties. When completed, this will create a statewide, rural focused fiber optic network with as many as 60 redundancies between the end user and the destination of their data traffic.

For too long, networks have been designed on an ad hoc basis, connecting only those areas with significant enough population to allow for a quick return on investment. This has resulted in unreliable networks that travers through entire communities without making connections to the residents. Bug Tussel has designed networks that focus first on reliability and need, and has found that profitably follows closely when you put the community, and its residents, first.

The project contemplated herein, as part of the statewide network design, will have the capacity to serve significantly more than the 10175 homes and businesses first able to take service. There will be 9 network aggregation points along the middle-mile, allowing future projects to expand in every direction with the capacity to provide service for the totality of Jefferson County, and beyond.

Bug Tussel is installing a 144 strand transport fiber as its middle-mile. Of those 144, 24 have been given to Jefferson County through the public private \*partnership. Of the remaining 120 fibers, 48 fibers will be used for transport related FTTP, fixed wireless broadband, and cellular traffic, leaving 72 fibers, or one half of the installed assets, of additional capacity for future growth and expansion.



**f. Economic development. A description of how the proposed project will promote job growth or retention, expand the property tax base or improve the overall economic vitality of the municipality or region. This description may be supplemented with a letter from one or more persons discussing the potential economic impact the project could have for that individual or business. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:**

Both ThriveED and committees in Jefferson County have in depth studies and documents regarding the need for high-speed internet and its impact on the area. We will touch on a few of these areas here that are of critical importance.

Located between the state's two largest metro areas -- Madison to the west and Milwaukee to the east -- Jefferson County is poised for residential, commercial, business and agricultural growth. This corridor is often referred to as the "I-Q Corridor" which is significant to the state's vitality. County leaders are planning for new development in the recently approved update of the county's Comprehensive Plan. But growth depends to an ever-increasing extent on access to high-speed Internet. No business, no family, no store owner, no farm operator can afford to be in an area that lacks such access or in which the only options for high-speed Internet are costly, data-limited, and often slow cellular hot spots or unreliable satellite dishes. Unserved and underserved areas of internet service would significantly hinder the anticipated natural growth of Jefferson County.

In addition to the county's major employers and large businesses, for which high-speed Internet is a critical component of their operations, Jefferson County has hundreds of in-home entrepreneurs, home-office professionals and micro-business owners located in rural areas for whom high-speed internet is no less critical. Since 2010, the Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Department has issued 150 conditional use permits for home occupations in areas outside municipal boundaries where county zoning ordinances are in force. The occupations of these rural property owners include auto repair, wedding barns, small retail stores, contractors, metal and wood sculpture, beauty salons, welding shops, landscaping, federal firearms dealer and massage therapy. In addition, we know anecdotally that a large number of rural residents operate professional businesses out of their homes for which no conditional use permits are required. These occupations include realtor, insurance agent, investment advisor, writer, editor, photographer and therapist.

Vicki Pratt, Executive Director, Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium and President, Thrive Economic Development states, "Lack of high-speed internet access is a major barrier to the economic development growth in Jefferson County, and adversely impacts our regional competitiveness. According to the National Associations of Counties, only 56% of the rural population of Jefferson County has access to broadband."

Leadership of MadRep and the The Milwaukee 7 Economic Development Partnership (M7), representing the capital region and the seven counties of Southeast Wisconsin indicate, "The lack of high-speed internet access is a major block to economic development in Jefferson County. Economic development does not know political boundaries, Jefferson County needs internet service that is on par with its neighboring counties. MadRep, the M7 Region and Jefferson County share labor shed, supply chains and businesses with operations throughout the I-94 corridor region, with examples including Husco, Generac and Fisher Barton. Additionally, education for the workforce of the future is crucial and broadband plays and ever emerging need to facilitate these efforts. Jefferson County is also home to telecommuters working for companies in both the M7 and Madison regions; appropriate broadband capacity will help support these workers."

Jefferson County is a key location along the Milwaukee-Madison corridor and the I-Q Corridor, connecting Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison and Minneapolis. These corridors are significant to the state and the vitality of the future. In order for Jefferson County to be a part of the economic potential and growth, it must have connectivity in line with its neighbors on these corridors.

Kevin Kaufmann, Director of the Small Business Development Center at UW-Whitewater backs up the above statements stating, "Reliable, high-speed internet is the most necessary means of communication. Having limited or no access to internet becomes a huge limitation for businesses. We are not able to run our business effectively without high-speed internet, thus, limiting the county's promotion of job growth and increases tax base."

Charles Kuhl the IT/IS Administrator provides this statement on how this broadband project would impact the McKay Nursery Company: "Having limited or no access to internet becomes a huge limitation for businesses. We are not able to run our business effectively without high-speed internet, thus, limiting the county's promotion of job growth and increased tax base. As our business is spread out over several townships, we would be interested in better broadband capabilities in rural areas as we now have communications gaps because of the lack of reliable services. When it comes to service for customers, having internet access would allow me the ability to process many things that are now requiring the use of internet such as email, online ordering and sending electronic files."

Area businesses also suffer from the fact that the internet service they have access to is not providing actual broadband speeds defined by the FCC and the PSC of 25x3. Jeff Okazaki, Executive Director, of the Humane Society of Jefferson County, explains how this affects his organization: "Because of the patchwork of infrastructure in the county, even though we are only about a half mile away from higher broadband service, we're currently out of provider range. Our broadband connection is limited to a supposed 5 Mbps download speed, however that theoretical amount in practice often actually amounts to speeds of 0.2 Mbps or less. This has meant that our staff contends with regular internet access issues that significantly affect the working of our business. We have difficulty reading e-mail, processing credit cards, or even accessing basic websites."

This project would have a significant impact for residential property values as well. Realtor June Herman, of The Real Estate Duo, who has lived in a town in Jefferson County for over 45 years states: "High-speed, reliable broadband internet service is no longer a luxury. It's a consumer expectation that is lacking in rural communities. This expectation rewards home sellers who have reliable high-speed internet access with increased home values and faster sales times. The Real Estate Duo's property information sheets for buyers include the current service used by the homeowner and whether fiber optic service is available, because that's what home buyers want to know. "Buyers today require high speed internet service for entertainment, shopping, medical records access, children's homework, higher-education classes, home-based businesses and community involvement. If a rural home cannot serve their internet needs, they reluctantly move to an urban community. This negatively impacts rural home values. It's possible to do all the activities shown above in a rural home, but it becomes very expensive. In our rural home-based business, The Real Estate Duo relies on satellite internet service for our home computers. We purchase the highest data package averaging a base cost of \$160 each month. In busy months when our emails and data uploads/downloads increase we exceed the data limit and must purchase more data packets, adding up to \$100 to our monthly cost to total about \$260. We also pay for unlimited mobile access for data services on iPhones and iPads, used both at home and on the road, at a cost of \$223 per month. We estimate 60% of that use is data, not phone, and primarily used at home to keep our satellite usage down. Combining satellite and mobile internet, our monthly internet data costs \$295 to \$395."

"Satellite service becomes spotty if a thunder or snowstorm is moving up from the south and across our area. After a heavy, wet snow we have to go out with a long pole and rake the snow off our satellite dish in order to regain service."

Information from The HOME Consortium's 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan. The HOME Consortium includes Jefferson, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties, which participate together to receive HUD grant funds for affordable housing. For the first time, HUD included a section on Availability of Broadband Access as a requirement for submission. The plan notes this need as follows, "Reliable access to the internet is increasingly imperative for job searches, primary and secondary education, college and continuing education programs, and applying for and obtaining assistance from various social service agencies and housing providers." ... "Areas of the Consortium with less than three internet providers include farmland areas in the northern parts of Ozaukee and Washington Counties, the southwest corner of Waukesha County, and throughout rural Jefferson County."

Last but not least, it's difficult to attract the age demographic to improve the county's workforce if there is no option to work from home. Jefferson County and businesses in the county are painfully aware of this. Jefferson County as shown its commitment to solving this issue by becoming a Telecommuter Forward! Certified Community. The Resolution No. 2019-47, Supporting Telecommuting Opportunities and Telecommuter Forward! Certification was adopted on November 12, 2019.

**g. Effect upon broadband service to adjacent areas. A description of whether the proposed project will or will not impair the ability of a broadband service provider or competing broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed project area.**

This project is about open-access expansion. In addition to compromising their reliability for the sake of profits, ad hoc networks that focus on dense, isolated population areas have a detrimental effect on future development.

Bug Tussel's middle-mile/last-mile fiber will allow immediate access to those along the route, and it was designed not with dense population areas as the prime motivator. This will facilitate further development, by Bug Tussel and other competing broadband service providers, by greatly reducing the cost to serve even the most remote customers.

**3.2.5 Other information supporting the application**

**a. A description of applicant's history or experience constructing broadband communications facilities in the State and elsewhere.**

As a growth oriented company with a statewide footprint, Bug Tussel has a long history of undertaking projects of this magnitude.

Through the PSC, Hilbert Communications, and its subsidiaries, have been awarded a number of grants, as shown on Table 2 below. All projects have been completed, or are in the process of being completed, within the parameters outlined in each respective grant application:

**Table 2. Grant Awards.**

Grant	Year	Technology	Status	Customers
Oneida County - I	2015	Fixed Wireless	Completed	199
Oneida County – II	2017	Fixed Wireless	Completed	256
Florence County	2018	Fixed Wireless	Completed	42
Oneida County – III	2018	Fixed Wireless	Completed	179
Juneau County	2018	Fixed Wireless	Completed	25
Green County	2018	Fixed Wireless	Completed	93
Oneida County – IV	2018	Fixed Wireless	Completed	169
LaFayette County	2019	Fixed Wireless	Completed	24
Green Lake County	2019	Fixed Wireless	Completed	31
Town of Deerfield	2019	Fixed Wireless	Completed	7
Oneida County – V	2019	Fixed Wireless	Pending	Pending
Kewaunee County	2020	Fixed Wireless	Pending	Pending
Menominee County	2020	Fixed Wireless	Pending	Pending
Forest County	2020	Fixed Wireless / Fiber	Pending	Pending
Green County	2020	Fiber	Pending	Pending
Iowa County	2020	Fiber	Pending	Pending
Florence County	2021	Fixed Wireless	Pending	Pending

Fond du Lac County	2021	Fixed Wireless	Pending	Pending
Iron County	2021	Fixed Wireless	Pending	Pending
Wood County – SW	2021	Fixed Wireless	Pending	Pending
Wood County	2021	Fixed Wireless	Pending	Pending
Kewaunee County	2021	Fiber	Pending	Pending
Forest County	2022	Fiber	Pending	Pending

Bug Tussel completed a number of American Rescue Plan Act Broadband Access Grant applications that were not awarded, and four of those projects will commence irrespective of the grant award. Construction on fiber-optic networks in Marathon, Waushara, Calumet, and Fond du Lac Counties will begin this spring.

**b. A description of how the proposed project will or will not duplicate existing broadband infrastructure.**

The project area is one where legacy providers have not continued to make the investments necessary to support modern technological advancement. As discussed above, existing access exists only in areas where profitability facilitated the investment, which leaves large geographic tracts throughout Jefferson County with little to no broadband access.

This necessitates the installation of a middle-mile, from which future expansions efforts can grow. The existing middle-mile infrastructure, in addition to being sparse, was not installed to facilitate widespread FTTP. The middle-mile contemplated here reaches far into the corners of the county, enabling low cost projects to make last mile connections.

**c. A description of an applicant's financial ability to undertake the proposed broadband construction project. This may include information such as the number of years the company has been in operation, documentation of successful completion of similar infrastructure projects, evidence that sufficient funds are available to cover project expenditure and match, customer turn-over rates, and credit rating.**

Bug Tussel Wireless was founded in 2003, and in 2008 joined forces with McKinley Reserve and Paul Gehl to form Hilbert Communications through a merger of seven companies. With the goal to remedy the dire need for broadband and cellular access of those living in rural communities, Bug Tussel has grown substantially in its nearly 20 year history.

The core investment group has made investments in rural wireless and broadband in excess of \$30 million and is currently completing a series of financing agreements to fund over \$500,000,000 of new capital projects through a number of joint ventures with private equity firms and public bond issuances. Consolidated revenues per Hilbert's most recent audited financial statements is nearly \$65,000,000, a doubling year on year increase.

Bug Tussel has a proven track record of operating, maintaining, and continually investing in its network to provide its thousands of rural customers with the best technologies on the market. Collaborating with partners like AT&T, Bug Tussel currently operates approximately 600 broadband and cellular sites throughout rural Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa. Further, Bug Tussel has a rapidly expanding fiber footprint with existing fiber assets in Forest and Oconto Counties, as well as ongoing projects in Iowa, Green, Kewaunee, Marathon, Forest, Fond du Lac, Calumet, and Waushara Counties all set to be completed in 2022.

Bug Tussel and its subsidiaries can provide turnkey solutions for nearly any rural community. From site acquisition, tower construction, network operations, and sales and service, Bug Tussel can connect rural communities and keep residents competitive with larger urban centers.

Bug Tussel has been very deliberate in its network design creating significant redundancies through the use of “ring design” and a combination of over the air and fiberoptic connectivity resulting in industry high performance standards. This design and reputation resulted in the award of construction and operational contracts with AT&T for a portion of the FirstNet® National Emergency Communications Network. Bug Tussel brings the same reliability and redundancy design to an individual customer in rural Wisconsin as it does to a national emergency communications network.

Bug Tussel also believes that networks need to be sustainable and as such cannot be reliant on future grants or funding but must seek creative ways in rural markets to leverage assets. This application and our entire network leverages assets and relationships to create a superior network. Bug Tussel is in the final stages of a national build agreement with AT&T, with nearly 350 sites completed across Wisconsin and southwestern Iowa that also provides a basis for our broadband network and makes broadband possible on AT&T’s network. Since 2018, Bug Tussel has ramped its site acquisition and construction teams from 2 to 4 sites per month to up to 20 sites per month and has completed nearly 200 sites in a single year. These sites met the stringent quality standards of FirstNet and of AT&T. They also met our own stringent quality standards for each rural customer.

**d. For middle mile projects, state the terms under which the applicant will make its middle mile fiber resource available to last mile providers. Without disclosing project-specific or customer-specific negotiated rates for service or access, state whether access to the middle mile fiber resource will be offered to last mile providers at a rate that is reasonable and common to the industry. Describe any restrictions or limits that may limit the availability or interconnection with the middle mile route.**

Bug Tussel’s network is open to all providers, and we believe that by strategically placing the fiber in unserved or underserved areas and opening the DWDM network to other providers, that the speed of deployment for other providers who may want to use our fiber for backhaul, temporarily or permanently until their construction plans catch up, will be positively impacted.

The rates Bug Tussel intends to charge will be reasonable, and will include shorter-term lease agreements, longer-term IRUs, and fiber swap agreements. By including 9 access points throughout the middle-mile route, the capacity available for expansion will be easily accessible to any and all who may have an interest.

**e. For middle mile routes, state the amount of fiber capacity, by number of fiber strands in a cable, that the applicant has been reserved for public use. Describe any commitment or tentative discussion indicating the local government or State agency that might use those fiber strands, and for what purpose. Describe any restrictions or limits that may limit the public use (e.g. a possible use conflicts with an existing program covering the same subject matter).**

Through Bug Tussel's public private partnership with Jefferson County, 24 dark fiber strands are reserved for the County at no cost. This commitment to free access for Jefferson County is contracted for 30 years.

Moreover, Bug Tussel engaged with Jefferson County in the planning stages of this grant application to design a network that accomplishes numerous County objectives, better allowing the County to utilize the fiber they are given.

The proposed fiber route includes multiple rings, allowing for the redundancy necessary to support the County's emergency communication network. The network passes several existing towers utilized by Jefferson County for their emergency communications system, in addition to connect said towers with County satellite facilities, and the Sheriff Department's auxiliary facilities, resulting in a significant enhancement in public safety communication capabilities.

**f. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of individuals to access health care service from home, including any impact upon the costs of those services.**

The residents of Jefferson County are served by a number of health care systems, including Fort Healthcare, Watertown Regional Medical Center, ProHealth Care, Advocate Aurora Health Care, Dean Care, UW Health, Unity Point Health and Gundersen Health System. All these medical providers utilize online platforms such as MyChart to communicate with patients about test results, appointments, scheduled exams and tests, billing and for doctors and patients to message each other directly. It is a big part of the way medical care is delivered and access to reliable Internet service now is crucial to the health and wellness of the people of Jefferson County.

In addition, Jefferson County itself has made a significant investment in an online health care and wellness platform for county employees and clients called MyStrength. Reliable broadband internet access is essential for employees to make full use of these online self-care resources, tools and wellness programs that target substance use disorders, depression, chronic pain, anxiety, stress, insomnia and other health issues. It is critical to note that if people do not have access to a broadband solution that are unable to take advantage of these opportunities. Jefferson County also utilizes virtual appointments to support their clients in their on-going care.

This is driven home by Mike Wallace, CEO of Fort Healthcare, who states, "Access to reliable highspeed internet can greatly enhance quality of life for Jefferson County residents. Our mission is to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve. To assist in those efforts, we offer virtual care (e+Care) through our online diagnosis and treatment service. E+Care offers patients an efficient and cost-effective way to access local healthcare remotely. While not every health problem can be treated through a virtual visit, for the conditions that Fort HealthCare can treat this way, we are able to respond to a patient's needs in an hour or less with a diagnosis and treatment plan.

"Without robust high-speed internet access in the communities we serve, patients will have barriers to accessing this cost efficient and effective type of care and will not be able to realize the benefits of virtual healthcare services. The internet's role in healthcare is here to stay and will grow as healthcare continues to evolve. In order for residents to be able to take advantage of service offerings designed to improve their health and well-being, they must have access to reliable broadband services."

**g. A description of how the proposed project will affect the ability of students to access educational opportunities from home.**

As everyone is aware, the importance of the information provided below is magnified due to Covid-19. A significant student population lives in the agricultural and rural areas in Jefferson County. Those students in K-12 would benefit by having the educational playing field leveled allowing them to complete their homework at home and upload their assignments. The ability to perform research is also a critical component.

Barbara Johnson, Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the School District of Jefferson, states: "Improving high speed internet for the students attending the School District of Jefferson and throughout Jefferson County is not just a want, but a need. We feel preparing students to be digital citizens working in a digital environment is critical. As such, we provide our students with 1:1 internet capable device access and teachers prepare coursework, assignments, and instructional practice opportunities for learning."

An impact to the school and the families of students is driven home by Barbara's statement: "We currently, open our school doors before and after school hours to provide for students living in homes without broadband access and/or limit out of school assignments using the internet." Consider how this affects a dairy farm family that needs to figure out how to transport a child or children to school early or pick them up late which would occur during milking hours.



Another school in another area of Jefferson County is affected in much the same way. Pamela Streich, recently retired District Administrator for Lake Mills Area School District states: "The rapid growth of technology has become part of the world of education. Students use technology daily in classrooms through school computers and tablets. This technology is used for schoolwork, homework, and learning. Internet research has become the norm and the expectation for students in a multitude of subject areas. There are opportunities for kids to take online courses that are otherwise not available to them but limited broadband access to our families puts them at a disadvantage, as they are unable to work from home. Right now, our student's internet options are limited and lacking in our rural areas. Without equal access for all of our students, they are not on a level playing field in relations to other students in the county and throughout our entire state".

Brian Henning, District Administrator of the Waterloo School District drives home the impact on both school and families with students. Special Note: The area around Waterloo in Jefferson County is located in a large area that previous PSC maps identified as unserved and underserved. Brian states: "Because internet research and assignments are a daily part of learning, our students rely heavily on their devices. However, we still need to be mindful of which students do not have internet access at home due to lack of service availability. Students without internet access are forced to either utilize class time intended for other purposes or stay after school during the week to use the schools internet. Parents may need to take them to the public library, local stores, or other hotspots outside of regular school hours or choose to miss out on the opportunities available to students who have access to internet. This can be both time consuming and frustrating for the students and parents."

While Brian's statement provides a potential solution in families using a public library for internet access, we know that libraries are being stressed for usage. Kelli Mountford, library director of the Karl Junginger Memorial Library in Waterloo, sheds a laser focus on issues stating: "With limited or no access, it can be a struggle for many to access the necessary online information and resources. On almost a daily basis I witness patrons of our library sitting in their vehicles or outside our building when we are closed using our Free WiFi access. There are many patrons that live in rural areas that come to our library looking to borrow our WiFi Hotspots on a daily basis. Unfortunately, the library has only a couple of the WiFi Hotspots to loan out".

**h. A description of actions taken by a city, village, town, or county in support of the grant application that have not been discussed in the context of a public-private partnership above, including but not limited to:**

This project is the result of a true partnership between Bug Tussel and Jefferson County. From planning and design forward, Bug Tussel and the County have been engaged, and will continue to be engaged to complete the shared goal of expanded broadband access throughout Jefferson County.

Moreover, Bug Tussel will continue to partner with Jefferson County following the completion of the construction project. Bug Tussel works diligently to level the playing field so that rural areas can utilize the same types of services as urbanized areas and therefore able to fully compete economically and socially to attract and retain residents and businesses. Through its community outreach component, Bug Tussel University, Bug Tussel will work with Jefferson County to provide educational seminars ranging from basic classes (“How to use the internet” and “How to use social media”) to more advanced curriculum. Bug Tussel University personnel are always very engaged in the communities in which Bug Tussel operates, seeking user feedback on ways to assist them in connecting technology and the community.

**i. Letters and messages in support of the application submitted by prospective customers, local government officials, and other interested persons.**

Please see the attached Letters of Support from government officials, schools, and others, the first ten of which have been identified, that will benefit from this project, collectively attached as **Exhibit C**.

**EXHIBIT LIST**

- A. Agreement to Establish Public Private Partnership for the Purpose of Applying for a Broadband Expansion Grant**
- B. Statement of Need - Ben Wehmeier, County Administrator**
- C. Letters of Support**
  - a. Senator Steve Nass;**
  - b. Representative Scott Fitzgerald;**
  - c. Charles Urness, Ph.D, Superintendent, School District of Jefferson;**
  - d. Dr. Rob Abbott, Superintendent, School District of Fort Atkinson;**
  - e. Pamela A. Streich, District Administrator, Lake Mills Area School District;**
  - f. Brian C. Henning, District Administrator, Waterloo School District;**
  - g. Ryan Jonas, Director of Technology, Palmyra-Eagle Area School District;**
  - h. Kevin Emrath, Chairman, Town of Farmington’**
  - i. Tina Barnes, Clerk, Town of Jefferson; and**
  - j. Tina Crave, President and CEO, Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation**

## **AGREEMENT TO ESTABLISH PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPLYING FOR A BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT**

THIS PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ("Agreement") is made this 14<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2022 ("Effective Date") by and between Jefferson County, Wisconsin (the "County"), a political subdivision of the State of Wisconsin, and Hilbert Communications, LLC, a Wisconsin Limited Liability Company ("Hilbert"). The County and Hilbert are collectively referred to as the "Parties".

### **RECITALS**

A. The County seeks to promote development of high-speed broadband services to unserved and underserved areas within its boundaries and believes that cooperation with private sector partners is necessary for the development of a county-wide broadband network that meets the needs of the County, its resident, and its businesses.

B. To encourage and facilitate deployment of high-speed broadband service in unserved and underserved areas within the County, the County and Hilbert seek to enter into a public private partnership to construct broadband infrastructure to facilitate the future development by internet service providers (the "Project").

C. The full scope of the Project will be defined in the final partnership agreement between the Parties ("Final Partnership Agreement").

D. The Parties intend that Hilbert, with the County as its public partner, apply to the State of Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Program ("Grant Program") to obtain a grant to be used to pay for a portion of the cost of constructing the Project.

E. The County finds the Project to be in the public interest of the residents and businesses of Jefferson County.

### **AGREEMENT**

THE PARTIES agree as follows:

1. **Purpose.** By this Agreement, the County and Hilbert agree to form a public-private partnership so that Hilbert can apply to the Grant Program to obtain funds to be applied toward construction of the Project. The County agrees that, as Hilbert's public partner, it will cooperate with Hilbert in preparation of the grant application.

2. **Project.** The Project will be developed by Hilbert. The estimated cost of the Project is \$11,750,000.

3. **Project Funding.** In its grant application, Hilbert shall request a grant for Twenty-five percent (25%) of the estimated project cost. If the Grant is awarded and if the Project receives final approval from each Party's respective governing body, each Party agrees in principle to be responsible for a portion of the estimated project costs, subject to further review.

4. **Authorization.** Each Party represents that it has the authority to execute this Agreement.

5. **Records.** Hilbert shall provide the County with a copy of its application to the Grant Program at the same time the application is submitted to the PSC.

6. **Termination.** This Agreement shall become effective on the Effective Date and shall terminate if Hilbert's grant application is unsuccessful. If the grant application is successful, this Agreement shall terminate one (1) year after the grant award or in the event that the Parties enter into a Final Partnership Agreement before the one (1) year period expires.

7. **Entire Agreement.** There are no representations or understandings of any kind not stated in this Agreement.

8. **Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

9. **Counterparts.** This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

[SIGNATURE PAGE FOLLOWS]

**JEFFERSON COUNTY**

The undersigned Jefferson County official has executed this Agreement pursuant to duly adopted Resolution No. 2021-55 dated March 8th, 2022.

  
Benjamin Wehmeier, County Administrator

STATE OF WISCONSIN )  
 ) SS.  
JEFFERSONCOUNTY )



Personally came before me on March 14th, 2022, the above named Benjamin Wehmeier, to me known to be the persons who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledge the same.

  
Notary Public, State of Wisconsin  
My Commission Expires: Feb 14, 2026

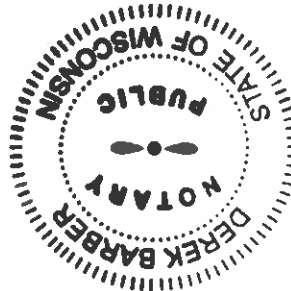
**HILBERT COMMUNICATIONS, LLC**

  
Mitchel Olson, Chief Development Officer | General Counsel

STATE OF WISCONSIN )  
 ) SS.  
BROWN COUNTY )

Personally came before me on March 14, 2022, the above named Mitchel Olson, to me known to be the persons who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledge the same.

  
Notary Public, State of Wisconsin  
My Commission Expires: Permanent





## JEFFERSON COUNTY

### OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

311 S. Center Avenue, Room 111  
Jefferson, WI 53549  
Telephone (920) 674-7101  
Website: jeffersoncountywi.gov

**BEN WEHMEIER**  
County Administrator

**TAMMIE J. JAEGER**  
Administrative Secretary

**“Jefferson County: Responsible government advancing quality of life.”**

Steffany Powell Coker  
Secretary to the Commission  
Public Service Commission  
North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Ms. Coker,

I write today on behalf of Jefferson County and our communities with our goal to provide equitable and adequate broadband coverage to each corner of Jefferson County. Jefferson County has worked hard in its efforts to accelerate the pace of achieving this goal through developing a specific Broadband Working Group which has overseen numerous efforts that led the county to being designated a Broadband Forward! Community and Telecommuter Forward! Community. In addition, this work has been supported through various planning processes to include the County's Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan Update, the latter being approved in 2021. The community feedback for both planning documents prioritized the need for broadband countywide and the recognition that this is an essential need for education, economic development, telecommuting, healthcare, and quality of life. Further, Jefferson County's unique position in the state of being the bridge to connect the Madison and Milwaukee Region makes it even more crucial that our broadband capabilities are equitable to others on this important I-94 corridor not only for our own growth potential, but the importance of this corridor, often referred to as the I-Q Corridor, has for the state's economic future.

These strategic efforts have led to building public/private partnerships in the county's efforts to help improve this vital service to our communities. Our first partnership began with Netwurx and Bertram. Netwurx was able to receive a grant in the greater Town of Watertown area to expand fixed wireless service. This was followed by the County and Bertram, with assistance by Netwurx, on securing CARES Act funding that facilitated the construction of four large fixed wireless sites in strategic locations in the county. Despite these efforts, there were numerous areas in the county that were still identified as unserved and underserved. Further, many of the areas that may be shown to have coverage by fixed wireless sites were not accessible to receive these services due to various conditions. As such this led the county to work with Bertram and Netwurx in 2021 to apply for six applications covering various parts of the county with the PSC APRA grants to seek fiber to the premise projects. Both recognized the need for diverse methods to provide equitable and adequate broadband coverage. In the interim partners, such as school and libraries, have continued their efforts to bridge the gap for broadband. These efforts include making available hotspots and expanding capabilities of public wireless access to parking lots, so community members and students have a resource to assist them in their needs.

Parallel to the ARPA grant project being planned, the FCC released the results of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF), of which Jefferson County had several areas identified meeting the requirements for this program. The RDOF mapped areas along with previous grant project areas were consistent with the maps the PSC had produced for unserved and underserved areas of Jefferson County. Preliminary maps were released in December of 2021 for this grant application and were in place until February 9, 2022. On February 10, 2022, new maps were released showing the county no longer had any areas that were unserved or underserved. This led to one potential public/private partnership who was looking at a project in an underserved portion community from not moving forward.

As one of our school partners, who is actively trying to assist to improve the broadband access for their district, commented “magically overnight we have fixed the broadband challenges in Jefferson County.” Ironically, our residents and businesses did not get the memo either, as the access to equitable and adequate broadband on the ground did not change from February 8 to February 11.

After these maps were released, the county worked to do a sample size of transmission speeds through the county board supervisors in their districts, to validate our feedback of service availability by various county stakeholders. The county received data from 22 of our 30 supervisory districts. In general, the small sample size validates the pre-February 10, 2022, maps, recognizing some service level improvements.

Many of our county board members who represent the more rural areas continue to show that most of their speeds are below the 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload service levels. There were seven supervisory districts with less the 25 Mbps with four supervisory districts with less than 10 Mbps download speeds, ranging from 2.07 to 7.48. It should be noted that the 7.48 was reported in an urban district, not a rural district. In addition, there were seven districts where the upload speed was less than 3 Mbps with that range from .26 to 2.82, with three districts having less than 1 Mbps upload service levels.

Two other interesting notes also came out of this quick test. First, there are several supervisors in urban districts who were below the 25 X 3 speeds or just above these speeds, which reinforced the need for all parts of the county needing broadband. There was also a board member who had difficulty, due to limited broadband, to run the speed test and it took seven attempts to be able to connect. Other partners have also done a subregion study of the county through a speed test as well. The results are similar to the results in our supervisory districts, with a median download speed of 13.68 Mbps and a median upload speed of 2 Mbps. The preliminary data also indicates there is less than 30% access to wired connections outside urban service areas with primary reliance appearing to be on fixed wireless or cellular data and in some cases satellite.

Considering this information, the county would opine that access to equitable and adequate broadband appear to be more representative by the preliminary maps published on 12/8/2021 versus the current maps that indicated there are no unserved or underserved portions in Jefferson County. The county has partnered with three different partners for this grant cycle in our attempt to carry out the primary goal of providing equitable and adequate broadband for all of Jefferson County.

Respectfully submitted,



Ben Wehmeier  
County Administrator



July 26, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6th Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

I am commenting in support of the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant to help the residents in Jefferson County. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural urban areas.

The lack of high-speed Internet access is a major road block to economic development in Jefferson County. In our digital age, the poor broadband infrastructure in place leaves a detrimental impact on small, underserved and rural communities. Local businesses are losing opportunities because of poor Internet connections. Students are placed at a competitive disadvantage as they struggle to access information online with the same ease as their peers. Residents are unable to reliably use the Internet for basic tasks such as finding job postings, booking business and personal travel arrangements and managing bank accounts. The fact of the matter is that in our connected economy, access to a broadband Internet connection is an absolute necessity; without it, Jefferson County will continue to lag behind in job creation and community development.

I urge you to approve the grant application for funds to expand broadband access in Jefferson County. Enhanced mobile broadband will provide critical applications that improve the public health, safety and economic development opportunities.

Jefferson County has struggled far too long with quality high-speed Internet access and the stimulus funding as an opportunity to remedy the issue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Nass  
State Senator  
11th District

*"In God We Trust"*

11th Senate District

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707-7882 • (608) 266-2635  
Toll Free: (800) 578-1457 • E-mail: [Sen.Nass@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Sen.Nass@legis.wi.gov)





**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4905**

July 22, 2021

Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator - Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC)  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Division Administrator Nieto:

On behalf of Wisconsin's 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District and as the federal Representative for Jefferson County, I am writing to express my support for the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant application to secure grant funding to help both rural and urban residents throughout Jefferson County secure high-speed internet access.

It is my understanding that the current lack of high-speed internet access is hindering economic development opportunities in Jefferson County, and in particular, the limited broadband infrastructure that currently exists is having a particularly negative impact on the underserved and rural communities of the county.


For example, I have been advised that local businesses are missing out on opportunities to grow and expand their operations due to poor internet connections. Additionally, students who utilized virtual learning options were also at a competitive disadvantage, as they struggled to access the online learning tools that were available. Further, county residents have often found themselves unable to count on reliable connectivity for even the most basic of tasks such as identifying open job openings, making business and personal travel arrangements, and managing bank accounts. And, first responders, particularly in rural areas of the county, increasingly need access to consistent and dependable broadband access to serve their communities.

As digital platforms are becoming increasingly common across all facets of society, having reliable broadband connection is an absolute necessity. Securing this funding will bolster the opportunities within the county for residents, businesses, first responders and students to strengthen the community.

It is for those reasons that I would respectfully request that you give your full, fair, and prompt consideration to Jefferson County's grant application – in a manner consistent with all laws, rules, and regulations - so that they may receive the funds necessary to expand broadband access throughout Jefferson County.

Should you have any questions about this letter of support, please feel free to contact my office at 262-784-1111. Thank you again for your time and consideration of Jefferson County's request.

Sincerely,



Scott Fitzgerald  
Member of Congress



# School District of Jefferson

*Empowering Futures Together*

[www.sdoj.org](http://www.sdoj.org)

**Office of the  
Superintendent**

206 S. Taft Avenue  
Jefferson, WI 53549  
(920) 675-1000  
(920) 675-1020 (FAX)

**Jefferson High School**

700 W. Milwaukee Street  
Jefferson, WI 53549  
(920) 675-1100  
(920) 675-1120 (FAX)

**Jefferson Middle School**

501 S. Taft Avenue  
Jefferson, WI 53549  
(920) 675-1300  
(920) 675-1320 (FAX)

**Sullivan Elementary  
School**

618 Bakertown Road  
Sullivan, WI 53178  
(920) 675-1500  
(920) 675-1520 (FAX)

**East Elementary School**

120 S. Sanborn Avenue  
Jefferson, WI 53549  
(920) 675-1400  
(920) 675-1420 (FAX)

**West Elementary School**

900 W. Milwaukee Street  
Jefferson, WI 53549  
(920) 675-1200  
(920) 675-1220 (FAX)

July 20, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

Because internet research and assignments are a daily part of learning, our students rely heavily on their devices. Accordingly, we need to be mindful of which students do not have internet access at home due to lack of service availability. Students without internet access are forced to either utilize class time intended for other purposes, stay after school during the week to use the school's internet, parents must bring them to the public library outside of regular school hours or choose to miss out on the opportunities available to students who have access to internet. This can be both time consuming and frustrating for the student and parents.

It is our hope that internet services will soon be expanded to cover all of Jefferson County to make learning more accessible and convenient for our students. These advances will allow all students equal opportunities for learning.

Thank you for thoughtfully considering supporting Jefferson County's grant application for expanding broadband access so that all of our families may benefit from the amazing online opportunities available to our students. I trust that you understand the importance of this expansion project for our schools. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural urban areas.

I respectfully request that you give this broadband expansion project your utmost consideration for the maximum funding you may provide.

Sincerely,

Charles Urness, Ph.D., Superintendent

# **Fort Schools**



201 Park Street | Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

P: 920.563.7800

F: 920.563.7809

July 26, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County, Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

The School District of Fort Atkinson recognizes now more than ever the absolute necessity of reliable high-speed internet access across our entire learning community. We have always known that learning does not stop when students head home from school for the day, but the events of the past year have presented us the undeniable evidence of incredible inequities among our students and their families. Limited broadband access for our families puts our learners at an unacceptable disadvantage as they are unable to effectively learn from home. The School District of Fort Atkinson has identified 473 families who have reported internet access insufficient to engage in remote learning, and another 69 families that have no access to internet at all.

It is our hope that internet services will soon be expanded to cover all of Jefferson County making learning more accessible and convenient for our students; these advances will allow all students equal opportunities for learning.

Thank you for thoughtfully considering supporting Jefferson County's grant application for expanding broadband access so that all of our families may benefit from the amazing online opportunities available to our students. I trust that you understand the importance of this expansion project for our schools.

I respectfully request that you give this broadband expansion project your utmost consideration for the maximum funding you may provide.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rob Abbott, Superintendent

DJ Scullin, Director of Technology



**One Team, One District, One Community**

Fort Atkinson High School | Fort Atkinson Middle School  
Barrie Elementary | Luther Elementary | Purdy Elementary | Rockwell Elementary





November 15, 2019

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto,

I am writing to you today from the Lake Mills Area School District, Jefferson County WI in support of the Broadband Expansion Grant.

The rapid growth of technology has become part of the world of education. Students use technology daily in classrooms through school computers and tablets. This technology is used for school work, homework, and learning. Internet research has become the norm and the expectation for students in a multitude of subject areas. There are opportunities for kids to take online courses that are otherwise not available to them, but limited broadband access to our families puts them at a disadvantage, as they are unable to work from home. Right now, our students' Internet options are limited and lacking in our rural areas. Without equal access for all of our students, they are not on a level playing field in relation to other students in the county and throughout our entire state. Dependable and consistent internet availability is an important part of our students being able to use their technology at home.

Because internet research and assignments are a daily part of learning, our students rely heavily on their devices. However, we still need to be mindful of which students do not have internet access at home due to lack of service availability. Students without internet access are forced to either utilize class time intended for other purposes or stay after school during

the week to use the school's internet. Parents may need to take them to the public library, local stores, or other hotspots outside of regular school hours or choose to miss out on the opportunities available to students who have access to internet. This can be both time consuming and frustrating for the student and parents.

It is our hope that internet services will soon be expanded to cover all of Jefferson County to make learning more accessible and convenient for our students. These advances will allow all students equal opportunities for learning. After last year's unusual weather, there is talk that schools can "make up" miss time from weather days by virtual learning. Without confirmation that all students have equal access to the internet, the Lake Mills Area School District cannot pursue this option.

Thank you for thoughtfully considering supporting Jefferson County's grant application for expanding broadband access so that all of our families may benefit from the amazing online opportunities available to our students. I trust that you understand the importance of this expansion project for our schools. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural urban areas.

I respectfully request that you give this broadband expansion project your utmost consideration for the maximum funding you may provide.

Sincerely,

*Pamela A Streich*

District Administrator  
Lake Mills Area School District  
120 E. Lake Park Place  
Lake Mills, WI 53551  
920.648.2215 x363





# WATERLOO SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Preparing today's students for tomorrow's challenges"

813 N. Monroe St.  
Waterloo, WI 53594  
Phone (920) 478-3633  
Fax (920) 478-3821

Waterloo High School  
Phone (920) 478-2171  
Fax (920) 478-9539

Waterloo Intermediate/Middle School  
Phone (920) 478-2696  
Fax (920) 478-3987

Waterloo Elementary School  
Phone (920) 478-2168  
Fax (920) 478-9589

November 15, 2019

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

Here at the Waterloo School District the rapid growth of technology has become part of the world of education. Students use technology daily in classrooms through school computers and tablets. This technology is used for school work and learning. Internet research has become the norm and the expectation for students in a multitude of subject areas. There are opportunities for kids to take online courses that are otherwise not available to them, but limited broadband access to our families puts them at a disadvantage, as they are unable to work from home. Right now, our students' Internet options are extremely limited and lacking. Without equal access for all of our students, they are not on a level playing field in relation to other students in the county and throughout our entire state. Dependable and consistent internet availability is an important part of our students being able to use their technology at home.

Because internet research and assignments are a daily part of learning, our students rely heavily on their devices. However, we still need to be mindful of which students do not have internet access at home due to lack of service availability. Students without internet access are forced to either utilize class time intended for other purposes, stay after school during the week to use the school's internet, parents must bring them to the public library outside of regular school hours or choose to miss out on the opportunities available to students who have access to internet. This can be both time consuming and frustrating for the student and parents.

It is our hope that internet services will soon be expanded to cover all of Jefferson County to make learning more accessible and convenient for our students. These advances will allow all students equal opportunities for learning.

Thank you for thoughtfully considering supporting Jefferson County's grant application for expanding broadband access so that all of our families may benefit from the amazing online opportunities available to our students. I trust that you understand the importance of this expansion project for our schools. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural urban areas.

I respectfully request that you give this broadband expansion project your utmost consideration for the maximum funding you may provide.

Sincerely,

Brian C. Henning  
District Administrator  
Waterloo School District

July 22, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

The rapid growth of technology has become part of the world of education. Students use technology daily in classrooms through school computers and tablets. This technology is used for school work and learning. Internet research has become the norm and the expectation for students in a multitude of subject areas. There are opportunities for kids to take online courses that are otherwise not available to them, but limited broadband access to our families puts them at a disadvantage, as they are unable to work from home. Right now, our students' Internet options are extremely limited and lacking. Without equal access for all of our students, they are not on a level playing field in relation to other students in the county and throughout our entire state. Dependable and consistent internet availability is an important part of our students being able to use their technology at home.

Because internet research and assignments are a daily part of learning, our students rely heavily on their devices. However, we still need to be mindful of which students do not have internet access at home due to lack of service availability. Students without internet access are forced to either utilize class time intended for other purposes, stay after school during the week to use the school's internet, parents must bring them to the public library outside of regular school hours or choose to miss out on the opportunities available to students who have access to internet. This can be both time consuming and frustrating for the student and parents.

It is our hope that internet services will soon be expanded to cover all of Jefferson County to make learning more accessible and convenient for our students. These advances will allow all students equal opportunities for learning.

Thank you for thoughtfully considering supporting Jefferson County's grant application for expanding broadband access so that all of our families may benefit from the amazing online opportunities available to our students. I trust that you understand the importance of this expansion project for our schools. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural urban areas.

I respectfully request that you give this broadband expansion project your utmost consideration for the maximum funding you may provide.

Sincerely,

Ryan Jonas  
Director of Technology  
Palmyra-Eagle Area School District



July 23, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

I am writing in support of the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant to help businesses in Jefferson County. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural urban areas.

Reliable, high-speed internet is the most necessary means of communication. Having limited or no access to internet becomes a huge limitation for businesses. We are not able to run our business effectively without high speed internet, thus, limiting the county's promotion of job growth and increased tax base.

This also directly affects our customers by not providing them the tools necessary to communicate, place online orders and improve their customer experience.

I feel strongly that having fast internet service available to everyone should be a priority in all areas of Jefferson County. When it comes to service for customers, having internet access would allow me the ability to process many things that are now requiring the use of internet such as email, online ordering and sending electronic files. Residents could greatly improve their economic status by starting businesses and marketing themselves to the rest of the world. But to do this, they need affordable, reliable, high-speed internet.

Internet connectivity has become increasingly important in our lives. Access to broadband is no longer a luxury but essential to every day information needs.

Sincerely,

Kevin Emrath, Chairman  
Town of Farmington, Jefferson County



# TOWN OF JEFFERSON

## COUNTY OF JEFFERSON

[townofjefferson.com](http://townofjefferson.com)  
[clerk@townofjefferson.com](mailto:clerk@townofjefferson.com)

TINA BARNES CLERK  
PHONE: 920-674-5073

W7002 COUNTY HWY J  
JEFFERSON, WI 53549

To Whom It May Concern,

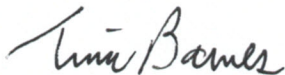
November 11, 2019

The Town of Jefferson is very excited to hear there is a possibility to establish broadband service to our community. We are a unique Town as we are split by the City of Jefferson. Four members of our Town Board, including the Clerk and Treasurer, live west of the City of Jefferson. We have many trees and hills in our area which have prevented us from accessing high speed internet service. This has prohibited the Clerk and Treasurer from accessing educational and helpful tools on the internet. The East side of the Town also has some limitations for accessing high speed internet service.

As Clerk, I have had complaints from residents about the lack of high speed internet service. Some residents have moved out of the Town because they could not have access to high speed internet service.

All residents in the Town of Jefferson would benefit from better access to high speed internet.

Thank you,



Tina Barnes, Clerk  
Town of Jefferson  
Jefferson County



July 23, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

I am writing in support of Jefferson County's application for funding to expand broadband. Internet connectivity has become increasingly important in our lives. Access to broadband is no longer a luxury but essential to every day information needs. While some people living in Jefferson County have adequate access to high speed internet connections, the "digital divide" may prevent millions of people living in other areas opportunity to take advantage of a broadband connection.

For schools, educational opportunities such as distance learning programs, online testing and internet-based research are impacted by the lack of dependable internet services. Internet access should not be a barrier to educational opportunities.

Families need quality online access to access employment and concrete supports. Employers require job applications to be filled out online and emails are required for communication. Critical government services such as Social Security, tax forms and unemployment benefits require access to online portals.

Our businesses need high speed internet to communicate, place online orders and provide reliable customer experience.

I feel strongly that having fast internet service available to everyone should be a priority in all areas of Jefferson County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tina Crave". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tina Crave  
President & CEO

July 23, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Support for Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

As a Jefferson County Board supervisor, the complaint I hear most often is not about highway potholes or property taxes. It's about bad Internet service. Options for Internet access, particularly in the county's rural areas, are limited. Service is slow, unreliable and expensive. Opportunities for educational, business and social, even medical-related, online interactions are detrimentally curtailed. People ask me, "Why can't the county do something?"

As chair of Jefferson County's Broadband Working Group, I can answer that the county IS doing something. Our recently updated Strategic Plan makes expansion of high-speed Internet service to all county residents a top priority. And we're not just talking about it. This year, we partnered with Internet service provider Netwurx and spent \$50,000 to fund a pilot project that brings new Broadband access to the Jefferson/Fort Atkinson area.

This application for a state Broadband Expansion Grant represents our vision for significantly expanding that pilot project. It also builds upon a successful Broadband expansion project made possible by PSC grant funds awarded last year to Netwurx and the Town of Watertown. The plans detailed in our application would make high-speed Internet accessible to a majority of county residents. We are nowhere near that now.

By virtue of its location between the Milwaukee and Madison metro areas, Jefferson county has tremendous growth potential. But county, community, business and education leaders know that having areas unserved and underserved by Broadband Internet is holding us back from realizing that potential. And the potential of each of our residents to use high-speed Internet to study, conduct business, receive medical care, be informed citizens and maintain social connections is stymied.

These days, as you well know, having reliable, affordable high-speed Internet access is as essential as having electricity. Jefferson County is working hard to ensure that no county resident is left in the dark. I ask that the PSC help us achieve that goal by approving this grant application. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Amy Rinard



Jefferson County Board Supervisor, District 9, Town of Ixonia  
County Board Second Vice-chair  
Chair Executive Committee  
Chair Broadband Working Group  
Member Finance Committee  
Board Member Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium

[amyr@jeffersoncountywi.gov](mailto:amyr@jeffersoncountywi.gov)

July 24, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

The Covid-19 pandemic required many people to rely on Internet connections for work, for school and for services, often for the first time, or to a degree that had not previously been necessary.

The pandemic really made it apparent that there are many residents in Jefferson County who do not have reliable or sufficient internet service.

As president of the board of trustees for the Bridges Library System, which serves libraries in Jefferson and Waukesha counties, I know that our libraries have for years identified reliable internet service as a need for patrons.

Libraries provide computer workstations and have Wi Fi hotspots available for checkout. During the pandemic, libraries in our system boosted their internet so patrons could get internet service in library parking lots. Libraries are doing what they can to meet patrons' needs for internet, but libraries can't meet the needs for internet access for all patrons who need internet service at home, at all hours of the day and night.

If I may, I will share some experiences from my own family. We live in the town of Hebron. We are now fortunate to have service from Edge Broadband. Even with Edge, we had difficulty getting a connection because of trees between our home and their tower. Previous to finding Edge, we spent many hours searching for adequate internet service. We were not able to watch any videos at all. Our internet service would get disconnected so often that many of our emails failed to send. It was impossible to buy anything over the internet. We could not fill out government forms because we could not maintain a connection. My husband spent hours in libraries using the internet for work. My children in college had to sit in their cars outside of fast-food restaurants at night to complete timed, online tests. Trying to meet work, school, legal and financial deadlines via unreliable internet service caused our family a lot of stress and missed opportunities.

This spring, a new family moved in across the road from our house. One of the new owners works from home. One of his first questions to me was, "How can we get internet?" They even had to go outside their home to use their phones.

Employees, students and anyone who needs to use internet-based services is at a disadvantage when they do not have reliable and adequate internet connections. Libraries recognize this need and are doing their best to help fill the gap, but Jefferson County residents need adequate internet anywhere in the county that they work, learn and live.

Sincerely,

Linda Ager  
President of the Bridges Library System Board of Trustees



741 N. Grand Ave., #210  
Waukesha, WI 53186

P 262.896.8080  
W [bridgeslibrarysystem.org](http://bridgeslibrarysystem.org)

July 25, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

Internet connectivity has become an essential component of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While some people living in Jefferson County have adequate access to high speed internet connections, millions of others lack the advantage of a broadband connection and are at risk to be left behind

Students of all ages are impacted by the lack of dependable internet services. Distance learning programs, homework assignments, online testing, and internet research are a struggle or are even impossible to complete with slow or no internet available in homes.

More and more employers are offering or requiring remote work. Modern businesses can't function efficiently without reliable internet. Employers require job applications to be filled out online and emails are required for communication. Internet access should not be a barrier to a successful Jefferson County workforce.

Everyday tasks such as shopping, banking, making appointments, or even applying for critical government services such as Social Security, tax forms, and unemployment benefits, all require access to online portals. Libraries in Jefferson County offer online databases and classes, programming for all ages, and e-content, such as books, audiobooks, and movies. With limited or no access, it can be a struggle for many to access necessary online information and resources.

Access to broadband is crucial to meet everyday information needs. Access to fast, reliable, and affordable internet will allow all Jefferson County residents the opportunity to thrive.

Sincerely,

*Karol Kennedy*

Karol Kennedy  
Bridges Library System Director

July 22, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

I live in the Township of Waterloo and am writing in support of the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant targeting rural Jefferson County residents.

When my husband and I built our home in the country (moving from the city of Lake Mills) in 1998, we quickly realized that finding internet access that was adequate and affordable was going to be a challenge. We were still working full time thus eventually settled for limited data plans via our mobile phone service provider (hot spots) and tried to limit our usage in the evenings when we were home. Dear Lord, the overage charges would kill us!

Over the years we have sympathized with our neighbors with school age children who absolutely need Internet/Wi-Fi for homework or school projects. Their limited options are incredibly expensive, and we worry about families who simply cannot afford the high price tag. Sure, kids have access at school or can go to the public library during open hours.... But what about farm kids with chores before and after school.... It was and is so unfair that they are placed this disadvantage of easy access to information required to keep up with their peers. Affordable and adequate Internet access is no longer a luxury item, it is a mainstay for students and country kids are being left behind.

I worked as a legal advocate for Jefferson County Seniors for 30 years and observed many changes with how elderly people use computers. In the past, the elderly population may not have been quick to jump on the cyberspace "highway". However, today, access to reliable Internet allows seniors citizens a better quality of life, and assists people who choose to age in place.

Elderly folks need and use their computers for more than playing solitaire! Examples? So many seniors now navigate email for communication, access social media, participate in virtual appointments with medical providers. More and more State and Federal public benefits programs REQUIRE that elderly complete online applications for programs such as FoodShare or Medicaid. Many older folks easily order their groceries, pay their bills and reconcile all their banking online. They do this not only because it's convenient, but for some who no longer drive themselves, it saves the trouble of finding a driver to take them into town.

Isolated Seniors video chat and Skype for long distance connections (which provide peace of mind for family members who get to “eyeball” their loved one from afar.) It is terribly frustrating when unreliable or sketchy internet interrupts a video chat exchange, but it is absolutely devastating if a homebound senior cannot order their groceries or pay a bill timely because their internet is “out”.

Expanding Broadband in our area improves the capability for those rural senior citizens to maintain their independence and dignity in their own home. Thank you for your consideration of just how important this expansion will mean to our rural children and senior citizens.

Sincerely Yours,

Denise Grossman  
N7434 Mulderink Lane  
Waterloo, WI 53594



7/20/2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

Access to broadband is no longer a luxury but essential to every day information needs. While some people living in Jefferson County have adequate access to high speed internet connections, the "digital divide" may prevent millions of people living in other areas opportunity to take advantage of a broadband connection.

For libraries, educational opportunities such as distance learning programs, online testing and internet-based research are impacted by the lack of dependable internet services. Loading webpages and uploading files for may be compromised due to slow or no internet. Internet access should not be a barrier to educational opportunities.

Government services and employers have transitioned to an online presence. Critical government services such as Social Security, tax forms and unemployment benefits require access to online portals. In our area especially, most employers require online applications for job opportunities.

Improved access to broadband services is essential to bridging the digital divide in underserved areas. Making access a priority will enhance economic development, 21<sup>st</sup> century healthcare and workforce skills and training opportunities. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural and urban areas.

Sincerely,

Eric Robinson  
Library Director  
Dwight Foster Public Library  
209 Merchants Avenue  
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538  
920-563-7790  
erobinson@fortlibrary.org



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

I am writing in support of the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant to help businesses in Jefferson County. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural urban areas.

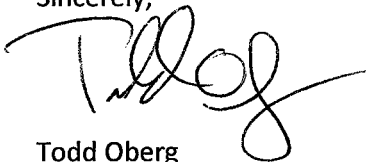
Reliable, high-speed internet is the most necessary means of communication. Having limited or no access to internet becomes a huge limitation for businesses. We are not able to run our business effectively without high speed internet, thus, limiting the county's promotion of job growth and increased tax base.

This also directly affects our customers by not providing them the tools necessary to communicate, place online orders and improve their customer experience.

I feel strongly that having fast internet service available to everyone should be a priority in all areas of Jefferson County. When it comes to service for customers, having internet access would allow me the ability to process many things that are now requiring the use of internet such as email, online ordering and sending electronic files. Residents could greatly improve their economic status by starting businesses and marketing themselves to the rest of the world. But to do this, they need affordable, reliable, high-speed internet.

Internet connectivity has become increasingly important in our lives. Access to broadband is no longer a luxury but essential to every day information needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Oberg', with a stylized, flowing script.

Todd Oberg

Owner

Fathead's Country Campers

W7419 Highway V Lake Mills Wi., 53551



City of Fort Atkinson  
City Manager's Office  
101 N. Main Street  
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

July 22, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

I am commenting in support of the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant to help the residents in Jefferson County. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural and urban areas.

The lack of high-speed Internet access is a major road block to economic development in Jefferson County. In our digital age, the poor broadband infrastructure in place leaves a detrimental impact on small, underserved and rural communities. Local businesses are losing opportunities because of poor Internet connections. Students are placed at a competitive disadvantage as they struggle to access information online with the same ease as their peers. Residents are unable to reliably use the Internet for basic tasks such as finding job postings, booking business and personal travel arrangements and managing bank accounts. The fact of the matter is that in our connected economy, access to a broadband Internet connection is an absolute necessity; without it, Jefferson County will continue to lag behind in job creation and community development.

I urge you to approve the grant application for funds to expand broadband access in Jefferson County. Enhanced mobile broadband will provide critical applications that improve the public health, safety and economic development opportunities.

Jefferson County has struggled far too long with quality high-speed Internet access and the stimulus funding as an opportunity to remedy the issue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mason Becker  
City Council Member  
City of Fort Atkinson

# HAUSZ BROTHERS INC

PO BOX 104  
FORT ATKINSON, WI 53538  
920-563-8473  
[Donnhausz@yahoo.com](mailto:Donnhausz@yahoo.com)



November 12, 2019

Ben Wehmeier

Jefferson County Administrator

[benw@jeffersoncountywi.gov](mailto:benw@jeffersoncountywi.gov)

Dear Ben,

Jefferson County lacks sufficient accesses to high-speed internet services to our rural residents and businesses. As a business with offices and facilities in the rural areas of the county the available sources for high speed internet are quite limited and largely insufficient. We have tried various options with similar results costing us production and time.

Providing broadband access is the only acceptable option for rural residents, farms and businesses to prosper in modern culture.

We at Hausz Brothers, Inc. would like to express our support for the county's plan to bring high-speed broad band to all county residents.

Sincerely,

Donald C. Hausz

W6127 Kiesling Road  
Jefferson, WI 53549



Phone: (920) 674-2048  
Fax: (920) 674-9176  
Email: Shelter@hsjc-wis.com

---

*Bringing people and animals together since 1922*

October 31, 2019

Rebecca Cameron Valcq  
Chairperson, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
P.O. Box 7854  
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Chairperson Valcq and Commissioners of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin:

Our mission focuses on rescuing homeless, abused, and displaced dogs, cats, horses, and other companion pets and farm animals in Jefferson County. Yet the realities of modern business mean even that mission is greatly and increasingly reliant on our connection to the outside world through broadband access. For us, that access barely exists.

We deeply support the proposals of the Jefferson County Board and its Broadband Working Group to seek additional grants and funding to help increase broadband access to the rural areas of Jefferson County. There is a great need in our county to assist non-profits like ours, as well as other businesses and residences affected by the lack of availability to basic internet access standards.

Because of the patchwork of infrastructure in the county, even though we are only about a half mile away from higher bandwidth service, we're currently out of provider range. Our broadband connection is limited to a supposed 5 Mbps download speed, however that theoretical amount in practice often actually amounts to speeds of 0.2 Mbps or less.

This has meant that our staff contends with regular internet access issues that significantly affect the working of our business. We have difficulty reading e-mail, processing credit cards, or even accessing basic websites. The variability of the internet also causes disruption with some linked systems. This means, nearly every day, when we have a drop in bandwidth or service interruption, it can cause other systems to fail, creating a compounding problem that requires additional time and resources to correct.

In the course of our business, we're also required to use internet-based services constantly throughout the day. This includes our website and social media, adoption information lookup, and communication with contracting municipalities or other organizations. Like most industries, many of our software and database services are also cloud-based, which means that poor internet access effectively cuts us off from business-critical data.

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*It is the mission of the Humane Society of Jefferson County to care and provide for the lost, homeless, neglected, and abused animals of Jefferson County, help place them in forever homes, and work to inspire kinder and more humane communities.*

Having access to a sufficient, reliable broadband connection would significantly impact the outlook of our organization. It would mean we could dedicate more resource toward the important work of animal care, humane services, and public safety. It would mean more adoptions of dogs and cats in need of homes, better access to quality improvement, and an increased ability to grow the impact of our organization for the community.

As one of the businesses in the Underserved Broadband Expansion Grant Eligible Guideline Areas for 2020, we thank you for your time and consideration and we urge you to support the efforts of Jefferson County to increase rural broadband access for our area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey Okazaki". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Jeff Okazaki  
Executive Director  
Humane Society of Jefferson County



Michael S. Wallace, FACHE  
President/CEO, Fort HealthCare  
611 Sherman Avenue East  
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538  
E-mail: Michael.Wallace@forhc.com  
Phone: 920-568-5400  
Fax: 920-568-5412

July 21, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

Fort HealthCare is writing in support of Jefferson County's application for the Broadband Expansion Grant. This grant will expand much needed access to reliable high-speed internet throughout Jefferson County.

Fort HealthCare provides quality healthcare to the residents of an eight-community area, and has the only hospital in Jefferson County. Fort Medical Group is a multi-specialty group practice with satellite clinics offering primary and specialty care in Fort Atkinson, Cambridge, Jefferson, Johnson Creek, Lake Mills and Whitewater.

Access to reliable high-speed internet can greatly enhance quality of life for Jefferson County residents. Our mission is to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve. To assist in those efforts, we offer virtual care (e+Care) through our online diagnosis and treatment service. E+Care offers patients an efficient and cost effective way to access local healthcare remotely. While not every health problem can be treated through a virtual visit, for the conditions that Fort HealthCare can treat this way, we are able to respond to a patient's needs in an hour or less with a diagnosis and treatment plan.

Without robust high-speed internet access in the communities we serve, patients will have barriers to accessing this cost efficient and effective type of care, and will not be able to realize the benefits of virtual healthcare services.

The internet's role in healthcare is here to stay and will grow as healthcare continues to evolve. In order for residents to be able to take advantage of service offerings designed to improve their health and well-being, they must have access to reliable broadband services.

Fort HealthCare supports this application for grant funding as a necessary part of providing virtual healthcare and other services in Jefferson County.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Wallace, FACHE  
Fort HealthCare President & CEO





**SUPERB MUSICALS • MEMORABLE DINING • SPECTACULAR SHOPS • FABULOUS SERVICE**

November 11, 2019

Ben Wehmeier  
Jefferson County Administrator

[benw@jeffersoncountywi.gov](mailto:benw@jeffersoncountywi.gov)

Dear Ben,

Many areas of Wisconsin currently lack access to high-speed Internet services and the rural parts of Jefferson County are included in this group. We are vastly underserved and wish to express our support for Jefferson County's plan to bring high-speed broadband to all county residents.

Jefferson County, Wisconsin in conjunction with Bertram Communications and Netwurx has proposed a plan to build infrastructure for statewide Broadband connectivity. The services described in their proposal are needed to bring our county into alignment with larger communities.

Our County Board members realize how important high-speed Internet is for our residents and has included broadband as part of our master plan. Providing broadband services to all homes is the only acceptable option for all to survive and even thrive in these times. School age children need to be on a level playing field with their fellow students that live in the communities already served by broadband in order to access school records and assignments, communicate with teachers, and do online research. For ourselves, we routinely have work that we would like to do from home but without broadband access it's nearly impossible to connect to our business in Fort Atkinson. This means late hours at the office or making a second trip back into town in the evening in order to complete work that could easily be done at home with proper secure Wi-Fi availability. Our company's IT Manager has tried a myriad of options in order to find a solution for us but without rural broadband he's been unable to do so.

We understand the need for county support on this project. In addition to broadening our agriculture county, increasing educational opportunities, providing access to healthcare, and the overall ability to stay in touch with loved ones and clients alike, our county will be better equipped to attract new and keep existing residents, job, and businesses.

Sincerely,

Rick and Jane Klopac



July 22, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

Internet connectivity is now vital to most aspects of daily life and access to broadband is essential to every day information needs. While some people living in Jefferson County have adequate access to high speed internet connections there are many rural areas with inadequate service. The “digital divide” prevents millions of people living in other areas the opportunity to take advantage of a broadband connection.

For schools, educational opportunities such as distance learning programs, online testing and internet-based research are impacted by the lack of dependable internet services. Loading webpages and uploading files for homework assignments are compromised due to slow or no internet. Internet access should not be a barrier to educational opportunities.

Government services and employers have transitioned to an online presence. Our customers rely on the library to access critical government services such as Social Security, tax forms and unemployment benefits require access to online portals. Employers require job applications to be filled out online and emails are required for communication.

With limited, or no access, it is a struggle for many of our library customers to access the necessary online information and resources. Improved access to broadband services is essential to bridging the digital divide in underserved areas like rural Jefferson County. Improving broadband access will enhance economic development, 21<sup>st</sup> century healthcare and workforce skills and training opportunities. The scope of the project will positively impact and improve both rural and urban areas.

Sincerely,

Gerard Saylor  
Library Director  
L.D. Fargo Public Library  
Lake Mills, WI

L.D. FARGO LIBRARY  
120 E MADISON ST., LAKE MILLS, WI 53551  
WWW.LAKEMILLS.LIB.WI.US  
920-648-2166



7/26/2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

I would like to register my support of the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant to help the residents in Jefferson County utilize the sorely needed resources that access to expanded broadband will provide. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both the rural and urban areas.

The lack of high-speed Internet access is a major road block to economic development in Jefferson County. In our digital age, the poor broadband infrastructure currently in place leaves a detrimental impact on small, underserved, and rural communities. Local businesses are losing opportunities because of poor Internet connections. Students are placed at a competitive disadvantage as they struggle to access necessary information online with the same ease as their peers. Residents are unable to reliably use the Internet for basic tasks such as finding job postings, booking business and personal travel arrangements, and managing bank accounts. The fact of the matter is that in our connected economy, access to a broadband Internet connection is an absolute necessity; without it, Jefferson County will continue to lag behind in job creation and community development.

I urge you to approve the grant application for funds to expand broadband access in Jefferson County. Enhanced mobile broadband will provide critical applications that improve the public health, safety, and economic development opportunities.

Jefferson County has struggled far too long with quality high-speed Internet access and the stimulus funding is an opportunity to remedy the issue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Dittrich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara Dittrich  
State Representative  
38<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

July 23, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Ms. Nieto,

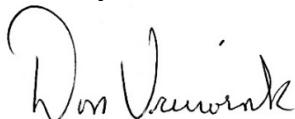
I am commenting in support of the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant to help the residents in Jefferson County. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural and urban areas.

The lack of high-speed Internet access is a major road block to economic development in Jefferson County. In our digital age, the poor broadband infrastructure in place leaves a detrimental impact on small, underserved and rural communities. Local businesses are losing opportunities because of poor Internet connections. Students are placed at a competitive disadvantage as they struggle to access information online with the same ease as their peers. Residents are unable to reliably use the Internet for basic tasks such as finding job postings, booking business and personal travel arrangements and managing bank accounts. The fact of the matter is that in our connected economy, access to a broadband Internet connection is an absolute necessity; without it, Jefferson County will continue to lag behind in job creation and community development.

I urge you to approve the grant application for funds to expand broadband access in Jefferson County. Enhanced mobile broadband will provide critical applications that improve the public health, safety and economic development opportunities.

Jefferson County has struggled far too long with quality high-speed Internet access and the stimulus funding as an opportunity to remedy the issue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Vruwink". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a stylized "V".

DON VRUWINK  
State Representative  
43<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District  
DV: da



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Ms. Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Madison, WI 53705  
November 27, 2019

RE: Jefferson County's Broadband Expansion Grant application

Dear Ms. Nieto,

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of Madison College for Jefferson County's application for the broadband expansion grant that they are seeking. This grant could greatly enhance the quality of life for many rural and urban residents of Jefferson County.

Many of the students who live in Jefferson County are faced with long delays in accessing internet service. Our students regularly stay at the campus until 10:00pm, when the campus closes, because they know that they can get reliable high speed service that they can depend on to get their work assignments completed. Once they leave the campus, they have little to no connectivity that they can count upon in order to conduct research and complete course work. Because many of our County students do not have reliable high speed internet, they are forced to drive to either the Fort Atkinson campus or the Watertown campus in Dodge County, because online instruction is not an option for them at home. Without high speed internet, Madison College students cannot effectively access the College's library resources or take advantage of our online writing or tutoring centers.

Because we are such a mobile society, students regularly use their laptops, tablets and cell phones to stay connected to their classes and their instructors. In addition, students pay their bills, check their financial aid or rent textbooks from the Traux campus in Madison all online. Students depend on access to the internet, that is both, high speed and dependable. With the lack of high speed internet equity throughout Jefferson County, some students cannot enjoy the same connectivity that their classmates have with the college which puts them at a disadvantage in their classes.

It is with hopeful expectation that I urge you to approve Jefferson County's grant application to expand the Broadband access to help bring high speed internet access to greater Jefferson County. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

James S. Falco, Associate Vice President  
Regional Campuses

July 25, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

I am writing in support of the **Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant** to help the residents in Jefferson County. Due to the scope of the project, it has the potential to impact both rural and urban areas.

The internet is woven into the fabric of society. Without high-speed internet/broadband infrastructure accessible to all we are disenfranchising portions of our population. We recently moved to far north west Jefferson County, north of Lake Mills (civilization). Little did we know that our biggest issue with rural life was going to be internet access. After extensive research we decided to sign on with the best option available for high-speed satellite internet – Viasat. Rarely, if ever, would Viasat come close to their advertised speeds/capabilities/reliability.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic life changed for all of us. Our son, a sophomore at UW Madison, was home for much of the pandemic and relied on tethering to his cell phone for schoolwork. My wife had a great employment opportunity available, but required high-speed internet, so lack of infrastructure prevented her advancement. I work for a Madison Gas and Electric as a Compliance and Training Coordinator. During the pandemic I worked exclusively from home. Our available internet at home was unable to support Zoom, Teams, or WebEx for required regulatory training or meetings. Luckily, I was provided a cellular hotspot by my employer. Unfortunately, as all Lake Mills area residents know, cellular reception in this area is also terrible. It is unlikely we will ever go back to the same "old normal" now that we've demonstrated the ability to productively work remotely. Decent internet would certainly help support that.

Internet connectivity has become increasingly important in our lives. Access to broadband is no longer a luxury but essential to every day information needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bauer II", with a stylized, cursive script.

Ronald J. Bauer II  
N7421 Mulderink Ln  
Waterloo, WI 53594

July 23, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6th Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

I am writing in support of the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Project. The proposed project is ambitious. Our vision is that an ambitious expansion in Jefferson County, with its location on the I-94 corridor between Madison and Milwaukee, and on the Highway 26 corridor between Beloit/Janesville and the Fox River Valley, will have substantial economic impact in a large area of Wisconsin. In particular, our vision is for Jefferson County to be a choice location for emerging telecommuting opportunities in the 21st century economy, serving as a bridge to other centers of robust economic activity in our state.

Our County Board has committed what is for us a significant investment in the proposed project. We have also worked hard to gain the commitment of two private sector partners, which will foster healthy competition and a high level of service.

I respectfully request your support for our application. We look forward to the opportunity to leverage our investments for the benefit of not only Jefferson County, but for all of Wisconsin. Thank you for your consideration.

Steve Nass  
Chairman, Jefferson County Board

7/20/2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

I am writing in support of the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant to help businesses in Jefferson County. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural urban areas.

Reliable, high-speed internet is the most necessary means of communication. Having limited or no access to internet becomes a huge limitation for businesses. We are not able to run our business effectively without high speed internet, thus, limiting the county's promotion of job growth and increased tax base.

This also directly affects our customers by not providing them the tools necessary to communicate, place online orders and improve their customer experience.

I feel strongly that having fast internet service available to everyone should be a priority in all areas of Jefferson County. When it comes to service for customers, having internet access would allow me the ability to process many things that are now requiring the use of internet such as email, online ordering and sending electronic files. Residents could greatly improve their economic status by starting businesses and marketing themselves to the rest of the world. But to do this, they need affordable, reliable, high-speed internet.

Internet connectivity has become increasingly important in our lives. Access to broadband is no longer a luxury but essential to every day information needs.

Sincerely,

Deborah Reinbold

Partner  
The Outpost – Lake Koshkonong  
W8639 Kuehn Rd.  
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

December 5, 2019

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

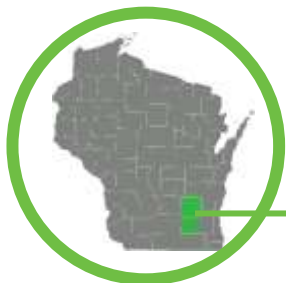
I am writing to express my support for the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion grant application.

Lack of high-speed Internet access is a major barrier to economic development growth in Jefferson County, and adversely impacts our regional competitiveness. According to the National Association of Counties, only 56% of the rural population of Jefferson County has access to broadband. In Waukesha and Dane counties, our neighbors to the immediate east and west, this percentage is significantly higher, 68% and 99%, respectively. We simply will not be able to attract residents and talent if we are unable to offer the same services as neighboring counties.

Businesses depend on reliable high-speed internet as a critical part of their operations. Broadband access makes e-commerce possible and is an important and necessary part of a community's infrastructure. The same way that railroad and interstate highways transformed business and opened up new markets and supply chains, the internet connects businesses to customers and suppliers to expand market growth and compete on a global scale. A lack of reliable access to broadband will leave the businesses, communities and workers in Jefferson County behind the curve and unable to compete.

Our mission is to attract and support business growth. We do that in part by working to ensure that our communities have the infrastructure and assets they need to be competitive. In the site selection process, locations are often eliminated due to inadequate utility infrastructure. The availability and quality of high-speed internet service has become a key consideration in competing for new business.

Broadband access plays an invaluable role in business attraction and retention successes throughout the country. For example, an industrial park in Cedar Falls, Iowa went from having 27 businesses and \$5 million in taxable valuation to having 160 businesses and \$270 million in valuation in the twenty years since it hooked up to the city's municipal fiber network. Princeton, Illinois was able to retain Ingersoll Rand, and 300 jobs, when it set up a municipal broadband network.



864 Collins Rd. Suite 111 | Jefferson, WI 53549 | 920-674-8711 | thriveED.org



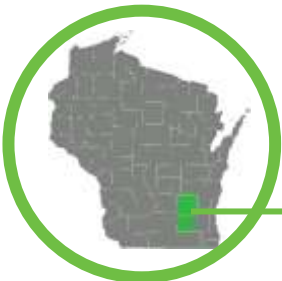


From attracting and retaining businesses, to attracting skilled workers needed to fill vacancies of our primary employers, reliable broadband is not just a luxury, it is a requirement. I urge you to approve the grant application for funds to expand broadband access in Jefferson County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victoria Pratt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Victoria" and the last name "Pratt" clearly visible.

Vicki Pratt, CEcD  
Executive Director, Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium  
President, Thrive Economic Development



864 Collins Rd. Suite 111 | Jefferson, WI 53549 | 920-674-8711 | [thriveED.org](http://thriveED.org)

